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ABSTRACT

One of a series of guides to the teaching of writing at the elementary and secondary levels, this publication describes grammar activities that relate to writing activities. The introductory sections define major approaches to grammar, summarize the current state of research on the relation of formal grammar to composition, and suggest behavioral goals in grammar for students at elementary, middle school, and high school levels. The major portion of the publication describes grammar activities divided according to those three grade levels. Within each grade level, activities are divided according to five categories: sentence sense, mechanics, grammatical structures, diction and usage, and relationship between sentences. The publication concludes with a bibliography of relevant books and magazines, and a list of selected resources for middle school teachers. (GT)

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A GUIDE TO THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR IN TEACHING WRITING

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Stan Johnson
Carol Knutson
Claire Ryan
D.C. Schuren
Barb Temple
Pat Woodring

Edited by Marjorie Smelstor

WISCONSIN WRITING PROJECT

University of Wisconsin--Madison

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
School of Education

Department of English
College of Letters and Science

Wisconsin Improvement Program

University of Wisconsin--Extension

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PROJECT INSTRUCTOR 1978: Marjorie Smelstor, Professor
University of Texas--San Antonio

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Richard Sims
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin--Madison

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHAIR: John Kean, Professor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin--Madison

Steven Fortney
English Department Chairperson
Stoughton High School

Phillip Helgesen
District Administrator
Oregon Public Schools

Marvin Klein
English Supervisor
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District Administrator
Columbus Public Schools

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Executive Secretary, Wisconsin Improvement Program

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INTRODUCTION

"Grammar," defined narrowly, describes the structure of a language. We expand upon that definition to include mechanics (punctuation, capitalization) and usage (common acceptable use of language, or what we call standard English.)*

Three approaches to grammar exist:

1) Traditional grammar emphasizes parts of speech and diagramming. It prescribes how the language should operate, based on the model of Latin.

i.e.,

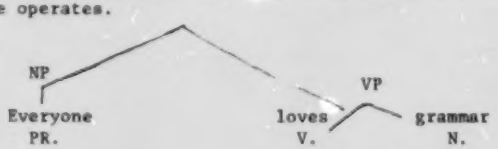
Pr.	V(Tr.)	D.O.
Everyone	loves	grammar

2) Structural grammar emphasizes basic sounds and meaning units.

i.e., [ɛ/vri/wʌn/ / ʌvz/gra/mar]

3) Transformational grammar emphasizes word units in sentence context. Like structural grammar, it describes how the language operates.

i.e.,



Most teachers combine these three approaches in the classroom hoping to improve student writing skills.

> The pupils could parse and construe sentences and point out the various parts of speech with great facility, repeating the rules of grammar applicable in each case, yet were utterly unable to put this theoretical knowledge to any practical use, as they showed when called upon to write an ordinary English letter.

Thus wrote F. W. Parker to the Quincy, Massachusetts school board, observing what other teachers have observed since his letter of 1873. Even today, no evidence exists which conclusively shows a relationship between the knowledge of formal grammar and writing ability. The following article succinctly summarizes the current state of research.

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*We recognize the importance of spelling in written work but feel that this area has to be dealt with separately.

The Relation of Formal Grammar to Composition

Janice Neulieb

Assume that you are an English teacher who has been told again and again that there is no point in teaching formal grammar to your composition classes because all the research shows that learning grammar will not help students to write well. Where do you go to find out about 'all' the research? There are a few summaries available, but not many. And there are some good studies, but not many. You, as a teacher, need to read five studies which summarize bibliographies of all the research of importance preceding them. Your next step may be to give up grammar as being without value in the composition classroom, or it may be to design a research study of your own. At least you will know what your colleagues mean when they say that formal grammar is useless in teaching writing. You may even be able to challenge their assumptions with some authority. I think that there is still some room for that challenge.

The five studies alluded to above are good, but they are only a beginning. Before them, all studies dealt with traditional grammar only in its practical application to usage. The results of these early studies were arrived at through objective tests, rather than through writing samples, and were therefore not really valid as tests of writing proficiency. In 1962, R. J. Harris did a study for his dissertation project at the University of London. This study covered ten classes of high-school students pursuing varied courses of instruction over a two-year period. Five classes studied formal grammar, and five studied common composition errors using classroom correction and sentence-generation practice. The results of the post-test (essay, not objective) showed that the formal-grammar groups performed less well than did the other groups.[1] John Mellon observes, however, that the conclusions were 'constrained by error-oriented pedagogy.'[2] Harris looked at writing samples but still seemed to do little more than an error count in evaluating his experiment. Whatever the shortcomings of his study, it is the one most frequently named by all researchers today as the study that really began to do serious investigation of the worth of instruction in formal grammar. It is certainly a study worth duplicating for verification.

The next important research project was the Bateman-Zidonis study in 1964. These researchers found that students instructed in transformational grammar improved significantly over students in a non-grammar class. One must add that the former improved in the area of sentence development and that four students in the experimental class accounted for all of the significant growth.[3] Again, this study is an improvement over most others done before it, because the results were judged from actual writing and because the researchers studied their

experimental and control groups over a period of time, but the shortcomings of the study were the small size of the sample and the limited achievements of the students in the sample. More needed to be done and was done by Mellon in 1969.

But before moving to the Mellon study, we might first see the conclusions that were drawn by composition experts on the basis of the two studies above. Since the Harris study showed that teaching traditional grammar did not improve student writing (error frequency, remember) and since the Bateman-Zidonis study showed that teaching transformational grammar did improve student writing (albeit sentence structure only and that only in four students), experts concluded, a bit prematurely I think, that traditional grammar does not work and that transformational grammar does.

An example of the sort of conclusions arrived at by researchers in the early sixties may be found in a very important resource book. Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer completed an elaborate study in 1963 of all the research on composition done up to that date. The report is invaluable for any person in composition who wants to know what was done in research before 1962, because the bibliography is exhaustive and the conclusions are thought-provoking. One conclusion, however, illustrates what I said above about grammar research and the conclusions which have been drawn about it: 'Uncommon, however, is carefully conducted research which studies the effect of formal grammar on actual composition over an extended period of time.'[4] That statement is quite true and unimpeachable, but then the authors go on to give a short summary of the Harris study and say 'that in view' of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing.'[5] If it were possible to sputter on paper, I would do so. The latter sentence has often been quoted to cap the whole discussion of grammar and composition, but no one seems to have read the sentence just above it. In 1963, proof of the issue either way was quite sketchy.

No one did much with the Bateman-Zidonis study or with the other possible areas of investigation, except assume that the problem was solved, until 1969. That year the Mellon study appeared, verifying and clarifying the Bateman-Zidonis study. Mellon used three groups of seventh-graders: the experimental group was instructed in sentence-combining problems; the second group was instructed in traditional parsing exercises; and the third group received no grammar instruction. The experimental group developed significant superiority in sentence-combining abilities. Certainly, one can assume from these findings that these students learned what they were taught and that the

students in the traditional grammar class did not learn what they were not taught. We can also assume that transformational-generative sentence-combining practice will develop syntactic maturity for seventh-graders. The study confirms little more, but it does offer some interesting speculations, which have been investigated recently. One other peculiarity about the Mellon study is that in his Epilogue, written later than the rest of the report, Mellon insists that he was not studying composition at all and that the studies of grammar and composition ought to be interdependent.[6] I wish he had not decided to interpret his study in this way, because confusion has developed. Since Mellon's study has been used to defend the teaching of sentence-combining in composition classes, it presents just one more problem for the perplexed investigator.[7]

Thus, here we are in 1976 with much being done on the basis of research which is neither complete nor definitive. It is no wonder that the hard sciences look at us a bit cynically; we need to clarify our findings by duplicating our experiments and by improving research controls. One recent study moves in that direction. For three years, a group of researchers in New Zealand conducted a carefully controlled study of three methods of grammar instruction taught in class levels. One group was instructed in traditional grammar, a second in transformational grammar, and a third in no formal grammar at all. Their conclusion is rather shocking: 'After two years, no differences were detected in writing performance or language competence; after three years, small differences appeared in some minor conventions of usage favoring the TG group, but these were more than offset by the less positive attitudes which they showed towards their English studies.'[8] It becomes clear that, at least in this one study, no grammar instruction works quite as well as any grammar instruction.

The researchers draw several other startling conclusions. First, probably only very bright students benefit from grammar instruction at all. Second, learning alternate ways of expressing an idea probably has no effect on a writer because most children already have their repertoire of possible patterns within their linguistic competence before they are old enough to understand the abstractions of any grammar. They add, 'It may be true that new constructions can be taught to English pupils but there is neither empirical nor theoretical justification for the teaching of current grammars for this purpose.'[9] Third, grammar does not help a student in editing his or her own writing. The no-grammar group was better at identifying inappropriate sentence structures and correcting them than either of the grammar groups. The authors of the study recommend the exclusion of grammar study in the lower grades because such study does no good and much harm by producing negative attitudes.

Before I toss away my grammar books in distress and wring my hands over the fate of usage in composition classes, I have

some questions to ask about this study and about the study of grammar. First, the authors draw some startling conclusions on the basis of one study, one which disagrees with Mellon and with Bateman and Zidonis. Second, what of the high school and college student? Perhaps a mature student of average or above-average intelligence might benefit from the study of grammar at a later time as the very bright student did in earlier grades. Perhaps we need to change our scope and sequence so that negative attitudes are not developed at the lower-grade level. Maybe we ought to make grammar something mysterious and special which can be learned only by those who are ready for its intricacies.

Finally, even if we would accept the Elley study as definitive, that study has shown only that style and sentence structure cannot be improved at the fifth through seventh form. The report concludes: 'The good writers stayed good; the poor did not improve.'[10] We know, however, that some things must be taught at different levels. Insistence on adherence to usage norms by composition teachers does improve usage. Students can learn to organize their ideas if teachers do not accept papers that are disorganized. Perhaps composition teachers can teach those two abilities before they begin on the more difficult tasks of developing syntactic sophistication and of creating a winning style. But even before we accept these limited conclusions, there must be more research done. This one study is not all that needs to be done. One good research investigation on grammar and composition every seven years in the entire English-speaking world is sparse evidence for drawing absolute conclusions. Duplication and re-evaluation must be the norm if we are to do our best in teaching our students to write.

Illinois State University
Normal, IL

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[1] R. J. Harris, "An Experimental Inquiry into the Functions and Value of Formal Grammar in the Teaching of English, with Special Reference to the Teaching of Correct Written English to Children Aged Twelve to Fourteen." Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1962.

[2] John Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining (Champaign, Illinois: NCTE Research Report No. 10, 1969), p.9.

[3] D. R. Bateman and F. J. Zidonis, The Effect of a Study of Transformational Grammar on the Writing of Ninth and Tenth Graders (Champaign, Illinois: NCTE Research Report No. 6, 1966).

[4] Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p. 37.

[5]Braddock, pp. 37-38.

[6]Mellon, p. 81.

[7]Another study which builds on Mellon's has been done and might be of interest: Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining (Urbana, Illinois: NCTE Research Report No. 15, 1973).

[8]W. B. Elley, I. H. Barham, H. Lamb, and W. Wyllie, "The Role of Grammar in a Secondary School English Curriculum," Research in the Teaching of English 10 (Spring 1976), p. 18.

[9]Elley, p. 19.

[10]Elley, p. 20.

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Where, then, does grammar fit into the classroom? We believe there are merits to the study of formal grammar: development of logical thinking skills, acquisition of a common descriptive tool, awareness of the uniqueness of human expression.

But historically, the tendency has been to isolate this language study from language practice. We feel that grammar must be integrated throughout the curriculum into the total writing process. We must build onto a student's innate and learned language capacity a sense of pride and satisfaction in being able to control the impact of his language through fluent application of grammatical principles.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

How can all this be put into practice at different grade levels? The following goals have been stated in deliberately general terms to give the classroom teacher flexibility to meet individual needs. At all grade levels, grammar lessons should be short and related to material being studied.

ELEMENTARY:

1. Sentence Sense: Recognize and produce complete sentences of different types: statement, question, command.

2. Mechanics: Use correct punctuation. Capitalize first words and proper nouns.

3. Grammatical Structures: Recognize nouns and verbs in context at the student's reading level.

4. Diction and Usage: Recognize that there are different levels of diction for different purposes.

5. Relationship Between Sentences: Write a short paragraph of several related sentences on a single topic.

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

1. Sentence Sense: Increase ability to recognize and produce more complex sentences.

2. Mechanics: Be familiar with all major forms of capitalization and punctuation and their uses.

3. Grammatical Structures: -Have a working familiarity with the parts of speech in context at the student's reading level.
-Begin to understand the writer's ability to manipulate sentence parts to achieve different effects.

4. Diction and Usage: Further develop skills in choosing appropriate diction and usage.

5. Relationship Between Sentences: Further develop syntactical links between sentences.

HIGH SCHOOL:

1. Sentence Sense: Continue to increase ability in comprehension and construction of sophisticated sentences.

2. Mechanics: Develop a working knowledge of all basic writing mechanics.

3. Grammatical Structures: Recognize phrase and clause structures and their uses within the sentence.

4. Diction and Usage: -Be able to read and selectively use a wide range of levels of diction.

-Write with correct standard English usage.

5. Relationship Between Sentences: Recognize and use more complex syntactical links between sentences.

GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES-ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A. SENTENCE SENSE

1. Discuss poorly-stated and well-expressed thoughts.
   e.g., This book is interesting.
   The roaring lion charged the trembling trainer.

2. High Rollers: Prepare sentence blocks made of wood or styrofoam (may also use paper). Each side of block has noun, adjective, verb, etc. After a few throws, students should pick up the value of word order in making sentences. (see Townsend, Barbara A. "Sentence Blocks," in Teacher, April 1977, pp. 63-64.)

3. Use sentences from classes to point out grammatical errors.
   e.g., Throw father up the stairs his slipper.

4. Give list of verbs, nouns, etc. to groups---groups that get the most sentences win or get reward.

5. Oral Expansion Game: Have one student create a sentence; choose another who adds an adjective or adverb to the sentence, ---can also be done as written expansion: one child writes sentence, passes on to neighbor who adds, etc.

6. Use word/picture cards for sentences. What happens when the order of cards is changed?

7. Make sense sentences.
   e.g., Table on the tape was a.

8. Draw or use a picture and write questions about it. Have the children answer questions in complete sentences. (Centerfolds of Learning often are useful pictures for this purpose.)

9. See #8 under grammatical structures.

B. MECHANICS

1. Discuss origin of the period, question mark, exclamation point, etc. Have the students create their own origins (see Farrant, Alan, "Punctuation: In the Beginning," in Teacher, March 1977, p. 93.)

2. Send students out on a one-day mission of quotation collecting--in the halls, lunchroom, playground, etc. All quotes should be attributed to fictitious speakers. Students put quotes in a box. Discuss differences, mannerisms, language "trademarks," etc. Use some of the quotations to demonstrate and practice mechanics of quotation punctuation.

3. Write or use a story with no punctuation and have students go over it orally as a group. Story can be written on board or put on a transparency.

C. GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

1. See #3 under sentence sense.

2. Have students write stories and read them aloud. This will help them be aware of grammatical errors. Point out that they might consider the readers---writers must help them out.

3. Integrate grammar lessons into all subjects. For example, point out during a math lesson--"Where are the nouns in the definition of the associative property?" etc.

4. Focus on adjectives and adverbs--Have class concentrate and try to visualize an unembellished sentence (The dog crossed the road). When students are asked to describe what they see, they will discover that everyone has conjured up very different dogs and roads. It might be useful to put the children's ideas on the board and compare meanings.

5. See #2 under sentence sense.

6. Mixed-up Parts of Speech Party (see Slade, Bertha F., "The Mix-up at the Parts of Speech Party," in Teacher, January 1977, pp. 85-88.)

   Monday - Children are given a "people" noun guest list; they add adjectives to these nouns
   Tuesday- Children add adjectives + animal names to guest list
   Wednesday - Children work on "menu" items
   Thursday - Use guest list (noun + adj.) and add verbs to show how guests will get to the party. Each child writes place cards: strips of paper divided into 3 spaces (noun--adjective--verb)
   Friday - Cut and mix up 3-word strips. Have children choose adjective--noun--verb combinations.

7. Discuss poetic parts of speech from article (see Creative Classroom, Teacher, Sept. 1976, pp. 122-123.) Have the children create their own poems.

8. Direct students to bring a sheet of paper with them to each of their classes. Have them write down a sentence they hear the teacher say. Could be varied to writing just the adjectives or adverbs.

9. Using overhead make classroom critiques visible to all to motivate the children towards quality work.

10. Pick 5 nouns from a list and write a descriptive sentence for each (should correlate nicely with #4).

11. Divide class into groups. Each group gets a teacher-corrected student paper. They discuss what sort of mistakes are made (Concentrate on 1 type of error). The group comes up with some generalizations and shares them with the rest of the class. The result is a group of rules for usage coming from the class.

D. DICTION AND USAGE

1. Ask older and younger students to write and then pair them. First, older child reads younger child's theme, points out errors and helps partner make corrections. Then the two switch roles. Admiration for each other's accomplishments is built.

2. A take-off on the commercial "Mad-Libs"--- Have students number a sheet of paper from 1-10. Teacher says for each, "Think of a noun, action verb, happy adjective, etc." After 1-10 are dictated and children have written down their responses, students are given stories with blanks within numbered 1-10. They fill in their words and then read the story or share with a classmate.

3. Response to vocal signals: -- Have students use words with variation in speed, inflection, voice level, pauses, etc. Then ask them to discuss and capture these same variations on paper (This shows that grammar plays a more important role in writing than speaking).

4. Faulty Usage -- Have children think of all errors possible in usage. Make a list or chart visible in the classroom. Indicate correct usage below the incorrect.

5. Have students talk to someone like a friend, teacher, parent, etc. and then write to that person.

6. Combining writing and speaking -- Have students close their eyes and think of something they want badly. After directing them to write down what they are thinking of, have them describe it using three words. Then have them tell what they would do with it using only 2 sentences. Using these notes, they can give a report.

7. Ask students to do physical education exercises that demonstrate verbs.

8. Talk about words used in songs.

E. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENTENCES

1. Ask students to select either a book or magazine, or newspaper article. Have them read it, concentrating not on the meaning of the article but on phrases or particular fragments that strike them. Direct them to write these down and then turn as many as they can into meaningful statements.

2. Have each child contribute a sentence, all related to a main idea frame.

3. Have teacher or students write expanded sentences. Then have children break these down into as many simple sentences as possible.

4. Direct students in sentence-combining activities.
   e.g., The apple is good.
   adjectives to elicit: red, juicy, big, shiny
   The big, red, shiny, juicy apple is good.

   The gym was noisy.
   The gym was crowded.
   The basket was difficult.
   The team captain scored a basket.
   possible result--The team's captain scored a difficult basket in the noisy, crowded gym.

5. Discuss moods created by sentences (happiness, fear, peace, etc.)
   e.g. His bloody hand groped against the wet, slimy walls of the black cave.
   Use examples and underline words that elicit the mood and define parts of speech; then reverse mood by changing the adjectives.

GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES-MIDDLE SCHOOL

A. SENTENCE SENSE:

1. Sentence combining activities. There are different ways to approach this.

A. Use signaled combining - Frank O'Hare's method.

e.g. The people were terrified by SOMETHING.
The people were in the housing project.
The project was near the gas storage tanks.
Something exploded deafeningly. (A + EXPLOSION)
The explosion rocked their buildings. (WHICH/THAT)
It smashed dishes. (ING)
It broke windowns. (ING)

Result: The people in the housing project near the gas storage tanks were terrified by a deafening explosion which rocked their buildings, smashing dishes, cracking ceilings and breaking windows.

Sometimes the sentence combining will get rid of words as in the following example on the use of parallel structure.

e.g. The blunt nose of the Hindenburg bobbed up.
The blunt nose hung a moment in the air.
Then it crumpled toward the field. (AND)

Result: The blunt nose of the Hindenburg bobbed up, hung a moment in the air, and then crumpled toward the field.

The number of clues given may be adjusted to suit the needs of particular students. For example, the above sentence gave only the signal (AND). For a class that needs more help, the teacher could use the sentence with the following clues.

The blunt nose of the Hindenburg bobbed up.(,)
~~The blunt nose~~ hung a moment in the air. (,)
Then ~~it~~ crumpled toward the field. (AND)

B. Use Open Combining - William Strong's method.

e.g. 1. Cars come va-rooming into the lot.
The lot is for parking.
The lot is where cars are washed.
They come in about 2:00 P. M.
They come on Saturday afternoons.

Students might combine the above sentence in any of the following ways (or others). Class can then choose which they prefer after noting and discussing the different emphasis given by the shifting of sentence elements.

Results: Cars come va-rooming into the parking lot to be washed at about 2:00 P.M. on Saturday afternoon.

At about 2:00 P.M. on Saturday afternoons, cars va--room into the parking lot where they are washed.

After cars va-room into the parking lot at about 2:00 P. M. on Saturday afternoons, they are washed.

Strong's method uses groups of related sentences that are combined as in the example given and then they are combined with others to form a short paragraph. This enables the writer to note how pronouns, transitional words, repeated words may be used to help the smooth flow of a paragraph.

C. Have students build their own - Christensen suggests giving the students a base clause and direct them to construct their own sentences according to teacher directions.

e.g. The sailor finally came on deck.

Teacher's directions to class: "Now add two modifiers to the sentence describing the sailor's height and appearance."

Possible result: The tall, handsome sailor, limping slightly, finally came on deck.

Teacher's directions: "Now add an adverbial clause telling something that happened to him."

Possible result: When the tall, handsome sailor, limping slightly, finally came on deck, he was awarded a prize.

15 minute activities of this sort 2 or 3 times a week can lead to much student discussion of their answers and possible options. With no right or wrong answers, students see ways of playing with language for controlled impact.

O'Hare recommends varying the procedure and timing of this activity and has found that students actually enjoy it when it is presented as a problem - solving activity or game.

Strong recommends varying by using large and small group procedures. He often has small groups choose their best effort, write it on a transpanency and then compare the results from all groups in class.

Teachers may also make up their own sentences to be combined relating them to students in the class or interests of their particular students. For help in how to construct your own, see the list of resources provided.

2. Ditto student themes containing sentence fragments mixed in with complete sentences. Have class correct the fragements in as many ways as they can. Let class respond to the different results.

3. Ask students with problems in sentence sense to make up worksheets for the rest of the class. Drill concentrates on run-ons with pronouns (it, we, he, she, they) and adverbs (then, now, there, suddently).

4. Show Haiku poetry on overhead, ONE LINE AT A TIME. Students can guess what the next line will be --- they need to look for clues about sentence parts to justify their guesses.

5. Sentence scramble. Distribute an envelope containing cards with either separate words OR parts of speech. Each group of 4 students gets the same envelope. Groups must arrange words to make an intelligible sentence. OR, they must make up a sentence following their chosen pattern if parts of speech are used. Have groups compare and discuss their results.

6. Read sentences aloud to the class. Have students listen for place where one sentence ends and another begins.

7. Give each group of 4-5 students a newspaper and have them find 5 declarative sentences. Beside each, in newspaper margin, have them write key words or phrases giving the main idea of the sentence.

8. Bring to class empty jars, boxes, etc. that had contained medicine and have on them the directions for use. On a worksheet list each item. Students then record beside each item the directions for its use and any warning information. Draw attention to the construction of imperative sentences.

9. Use reading material under study and ask each student to locate at least one of the 4 sentence types. This can also be done with comic books. If comics are used, students may also draw a line to show what part of the illustration each sentence meaning refers to. Comics are useful in pointing out the use of exclamatory sentences.

10. Expand phrases into questions or sentences. Use the chapter headings from a science, social studies or other text. Have students turn chapter headings into either questions or declarative sentences. Students may refer to the chapter to get information they need to write a sentence.

11. Use material from class reading which includes dialogue. Have students find questions that occur in the dialogue, write the page number of each and a key word or phrase indicating the question being asked. Students exchange books and papers. Second student refers to page indicated and using phrase or word guide, finds the question.

12. Have students write sentences using pronouns in a prescribed way. Sentences relate to things in the classroom. Example: Write two complete thoughts about a boy in this room the second of which opens with the pronoun he. Continue asking for two complete thoughts with the second beginning with we, she, they, we, it.

13. Build four word sentences by combining two adjectives, a noun, and a verb. Sentences can be only four words. Write ten sentences.

Adjectives	Nouns	Verbs
blue, two	truck	blew
cold, a	wind	flickered
an, American	lights	fluttered
big, old	stars	crashed
several	men	chattered
million	flag	twinkled

14. Basketball game. Use this game with worksheets containing a variety of errors that students make on their latest batch of theses, everything from sentence combining, to spelling, to usage, to punctuation. Before the game begins, give the students a day to work individually correcting the errors on the worksheet.

Basketball rules:

1. The class will be divided into two teams; the team whose captain does not have first choice of players will be on offense first.

2. A member of each team will, in turn, supply a correction on the worksheet.

3. Corrections must be given in the order that they occur on the sheet.

4. Each correct answer scores two points.

5. If a correction is skipped, the opposing team gets a foul shot, and if the next person, in turn, can make the correction, the team gets an extra point plus the right to make the next correction.

6. If an incorrect answer is given, no points are scored.

7. If a sentence may be corrected in more than one way, the referee (your teacher) will be the judge as to the "rightness" of any given answer.

8. The winning team will have an "A" added to their grade averages. The losing team will receive no grade.

Keep score by having a running score printed on the chalkboard and x-ing out each score as it is made. Two class periods of playing time give two good halves of competition.

Any sport can be used to construct a game by adapting rewards for correct answers to the peculiarities of the sport. For example, in wrestling, a take-down could be given for X number of right answers, a reversal for missing an answer, a near fall or fall for X number of answers in a row. In baseball, a right answer could be a single, two answers a double, etc., and a missed answer could be an out. All that is needed is to know what is to be accomplished, how the sport is played, and a little imagination. (Just a side note, these types of games would probably work well in other subject areas where recall types of answers are to be given.)

B. MECHANICS

1. Have students write a short dialogue using words students have actually heard spoken by someone they know or a TV character. Emphasize correct use of quotation marks, commas, end marks.

2. Place a group of words on the board without any punctuation. See how many different meanings students can come up with based on their use of punctuation.

   Sample sentences: what is this thing called love
   woman without her man would be a savage
   Louise thinks her employer is attractive
   Bill called Ralph come here

3. Read aloud an unpunctuated text. Have students mark their copies with end marks, commas, etc. Then, discuss the answers noting certain absolutes and also how changes in punctuation can change the meaning. Comparison may be made between musical rests and punctuation marks.

4. Pair students. One student makes a short statement. Partner transcribes the statement in quotes and supplies a tag at the beginning, middle or end.

5. Use "Pets For Sale" or "Autos For Sale" section from the newspaper. Each student writes at least two sentences containing items separated by commas. Read sentences aloud, pausing at each comma.

   e.g. The least expensive pets are _____, _____, and _____.
   The most fequently advertised cars are _____, _____, and _____.

6. Bring in newspaper headlines and science or social studies chapter headings that are sentence fragments. Convert each to simple sentence. Note what words the headline omits. Why?

7. In sentence-combining activities, call attention to places where commas must be added and discuss why.

8. Punctuation or - Capitalization Pyramid - Divide class into two teams. Team members take turns placing marks of punctuation in unpunctuated sentences. One point is given for each mark correctly given: errors mean 2 points are deducted from team score. First team to reach 25 points chooses member to go to Punctuation Pyramid. One student reads cards containing samples of a particular rule for comma use: challenger must guess the rule being used. Set appropriate time limit.

9. In drills, try to personalize as much as possible by having students write sentences about themselves. For example, use this list from Don Wolfe:

   Answer only in Complete Sentences

   1. What is your favorite day of the week?
   2. In what town or city and state were you born?
   3. What is your street address?
   4. What is your favorite vegetable?
   5. What is one of your favorite movies?
   6. What did you bring to school today?
   7. What is one of your favorite poems?
   8. What is the color of sand? Use the possessive of it.
   9. Quote something of interest you said today. Begin with the conversational tag, I said.
   10. Write two complete thoughts about getting ready for school this morning. Begin the second thought with then.
   11. Write a sentence beginning, "When I was ten years old." Use a comma after old. Tell something of genuine interest about yourself at age ten.
   12. Did you walk, run, or ride to school this morning? Write a sentence opening with a participle, such as "Walking down Clifton Street, I . . ." Put a comma after the opening phrase. Tell something you actually did on the way to school.

10. Personalize the writing of quotations by asking students to write about what they have heard today. Example: What question did a friend or relative ask you today? Begin your answer with the name of the person, like this: My friend Amy said, "See you at lunch." Now put the tag at the end of your sentence.

11. Personalize punctuation usage by having students write prescribed sentences about themselves. For example, use this list from Don Wolfe:

    1. Write a sentence opening with an adverbial clause about something that happened to you yesterday. Open the sentence with when, until, unless, because or if. Place a comma after the clause. Example: "Because I felt ill yesterday afternoon, I left school early."

    2. Write a compound sentence with the conjunction, but, about a moment of yesterday. Be sure each clause is a complete thought. Place a comma before but. Example: "I was very hungry at noon, but I did not want to miss the test."

3. Write a sentence containing a series of nouns. Tell about three recent purchases. Place a comma after the first and second nouns. Example: "Last Saturday my mother and I bought apples, pears, and peaches at the market."

4. Write a sentence about coming to school this morning. Open it with a present participle. Place a comma after the phrase. Be sure your participle does not dangle. Example: "Running along the rough sidewalk on Argyle Place, I tripped and fell."

5. Write a sentence using a comma with direct discourse. Use words you actually spoke. Example: I said to Miss Sherman, "May I borrow this book?"

C. GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES:

1. Bring in samples from ads or magazines of words which show possession, prepositional phrases, "be" verbs, etc.

2. Convert one part of speech to another; use words from reading material.

NOUN	VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
courage	_____	_____	_____
_____	photograph	_____	_____
_____	_____	psychological	_____
_____	_____	_____	initially

3. Week-long parts of speech activity

Monday: Distribute copy of Dear Abby-type column. Students circle each verb and underline each adverb and then, write a response using the SAME verbs and DIFFERENT adverbs. Teacher reads Abby answer at end.

Tuesday: Distribute article from sports page. Students circle each verb and underline any adverbs. If no adverb is given, student supplies an appropriate one.

Wednedsay: Provide 5 headlines for student. They circle verbs in headlines and insert adverbs.

Thursday: Provide selection from Feature or Women's section. Repeat verb and adverb hunt.

A running bulletin board may be posted for this activity.

MON		TUES		WED		THURS	
Advice		Sport		Headlines		Feature	
verb	adv.	verb	adv.	verb	adv.	verb	adv.
listen	carefully	played	well	reacts	promptly	admits	frankly

Friday: Have students write a story or poem using as many of the verbs and adverbs compiled during the week. Students get a list of all the verbs and adverbs found; each time they use one in their story, they place an x beside it on their list.

4. Provide copy of TV schedule for each student. Each one selects a title of a favorite show and writes beside the name of the show a NOUN that stands for the main character. Beside the noun, student writes a VERB showing a predominant action of the character.

CHARACTER	NOUN	VERB
Kojak	detective	searches

5. Provide a chart for students to write nouns and verbs associated with food, clothing, shelter, exercise. Beneath each column heading, student writes one noun and verb associated with his experience.

FOOD		CLOTHING		SHELTER		EXERCISE	
n.	v.	n.	v.	n.	v.	n.	v.
pie	tastes	coat	warms	room	cleans	basket	shoots

6. Divide students into groups with same hobby interest. Each group has a Thesaurus. Students list nouns and verbs related to the hobby; then they use the Thesaurus to find synonyms for each.

Noun	Synonym	Verb	Synonym
butterfly	moth	catch	capture

7. Divide class into 5 member teams. Teacher names a part of speech and first student supplies a word; pass paper to second student; teacher gives another part of speech; continue until end of sentence.

   e.g., Teacher might say: 1. Proper noun 2. verb 3. proposition 4. adjective 5. noun. Groups read and discuss final sentences.

8. Give half the class action verbs on cards; give the other half cards containing adverbs. Student reads his verb card aloud. Volunteer who has a fitting adverb offers to pantomime it. Class guesses the adverb. Switch sides next time around.

9. Have students write adjectives on cards describing a student from the class; they then tape these on the person or hang the cards on yarn around the person's neck.

10. Pantomime parts of speech in given sentence while holding up a label that identifies the part of speech. Class guesses the sentence.

    e.g., Football players eat big meals.
    adj. noun verb adj. noun

11. Have class make up Tom Swifties using appropriate adverbs.

    e.g., "It's cold in the freezer," Tom said icily.

12. 'Concrete poetry' - Have students write nouns, verbs, etc. to make the word LOOK like its meaning.

    e.g., h o p

13. MAD - libs; see Elementary #22. Students may also make up their own paragraphs.

14. Art classes--ask students to draw pictures that show certain nouns, verbs, etc.

15. Design two menus, one for a good restaurant, one for a bad restaurant. Keep menu items the same, change the adjectives that describe the nouns.

16. Personalize nouns by having students write nouns about themselves. For example, use this list from Don Wolfe:

    1. Write the name of a person you know well.
    2. Write the name of a town or city you like.
    3. Now touch the sleeve of your shirt or dress. Write a noun that names a part of the clothes you are wearing today.
    4. Write the noun home. Now write three nouns that name things you saw at home this morning.
    5. Touch something on or near your desk. Write the name of something you have touched.
    6. Write the name of something you cannot see or touch such as courage or hunger.

17. Verb finder: When students want to find out whether a word can be a verb, have them use I, you, he or it before the word they are checking. If one of the combinations makes sense, the word can be a verb. However, the students must also look at the job the word performs in any sentence it is used in; work could be either a noun or verb.

18. Have students construct an adjective chart, such as the one below, for a number of nouns.

noun	what color	what kind	what size
shoes	brown	new	large
table	blonde	oak	small

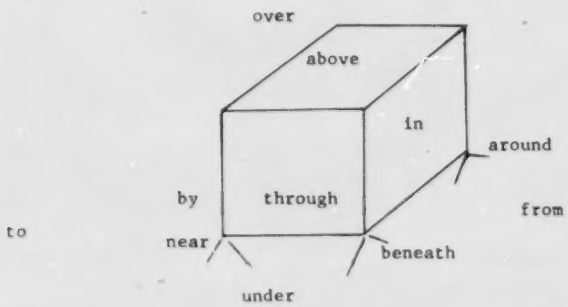
which one	whose	how many
those	my	two
the	Tom's	one

19. Have students construct adverb charts, such as the one below, for a number of verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

verb	how	when	where
walked	slowly	often	toward
ate	noisily	today	outside

adjective	how much	adverb	how much
bright	too	early	extremely
tall	very	enough	not

20. Preposition Box: Using a box, help students recognize many prepositions by the relation the word indicates.



21. Direct students to act out prepositional phrases.
For example: Tom walked around the room.
Tom sat in his seat.
Tom arose from his seat.
Tom went through the door.
Tom came into the room.

22. Ask students to write sentences using adverbs, especially as sentence openers. Students could read sentences to the class and try moving adverb for effect. Example of adverbs that could be used:

too	once	upward	snugly	gracefully
often	soon	smoothly	largely	hopefully
very	less	swiftly	slowly	tomorrow
again	more	politely	seldom	anxiously
never	late	smilingly	forever	courteously
quite	most	nervously	angrily	instantly

23. Select sentences from well-known authors, analyze the structure and have student write sentences in the same style. Also emphasize word selection.

24. Students write a story using only prepositional phrases.
Example: One Hour To Go

out of bed	at the table	across the street
into the bathroom	into my mouth	on my bike
into my clothes	on the front step	toward school
down the stairs	for my friends	at my desk

Jerry Rabow

25. Direct students to build ten-word sentences. In each sentence the student should use a verb, a subject, an adjective modifying the subject, and two prepositional phrases, one an adjective phrase, the other an adverbial phrase. Example: The man with the blue cap raced into the house.

nouns	verbs	adjectives	prepositions
car	ran	haggard	in
man	crept	broken	on
dog	limped	shaggy	up
house	stole	new	along
face	rose	worn	under
boy	lay	a	without
cap	sat	the	to
coat	raced	blue	down
book	spoke	red	with
roof	stood	ten	into

26. For infinitive phrases, have students write a list of ten of their ambitions. Example:

To play center for South High
To buy an old car for forty dollars
To win a game of checkers from my dad
To get an interesting job next summer
To take a trip to California
To ask a certain girl for a date
To be admitted to Benton College
To make my big brother proud of Harold Jackson

D. DICTION AND USAGE:

1. Correction work. Use "flub stubs," individualized correction activities that zero in on one problem. Students read and complete the card. Teacher puts number corresponding to the student error on top of theme before returning it; student uses assigned card and works individually to correct his error.

2. Expand upon simple sentence.

   e.g. Teachers have class. Students add modifier, etc.

3. Select usage errors from student papers. Make up worksheet of frequently occurring errors. Have students correct and discuss in class.

4. Adjectives and adverbs: Brainstorm --

   How many ways can a castle look?
   How many ways can a dancer move?
   How many ways can sandpaper feel?
   How many ways can a person speak?
   How many ways can a scream sound?

5. Place a sentence on the board. Ask for a more exact verb. Then expand the nouns with adjectives and prepositional phrases. Also shift verb to passive voice.

6. Draw attention to word choice in material being read.

7. Compile a mini-Thesaurus of action verbs. Class might start with walk. Give a student directions to walk across the room. Then secretly, have other students, march, stagger, swagger, etc. Class guesses verb and then adds all synonyms to the 'walk' page of the class Thesaurus. From time to time, brainstorm for synonyms for other over - used verbs and add them to the class Thesaurus. Individual students may add more as they find them.

8. Verbal errors in usage--Martian talk. When a student makes a verbal error, the teacher responds with a sound (e.g. Beep, beep,). Student catches error, corrects it. This makes self-correction less threatening and more spontaneous.

9. Memory tricks for usage errors. Have students memorize the following sentence to remember the difference 'their' - 'there'.
Put their money there
There contains the word 'here' and means place.
Their means possession and contains "I".

10. Grammar Derby. Make students aware of usage errors they hear. Students listen for, write down and CORRECT any usage errors they hear for a day or two. Points may be assigned on a sliding scale. For example,
errors by students = 1 point each
by adults = 2 points
by teacher = 5 points
Points are given ONLY if student has corrected the error.

11. Write a sentence on the board. For example, "The animal jumped from tree to tree." Ask for adverbs telling how. List on board. Then see where they could fit into the sentence looking at the shades of meaning each position has. Then look at the noun animal to see if it could be more precise.

12. Either make slides of or bring in magazine ads to analyze for word selection.

E. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENTENCES:

1. Cloze technique. Sprinkle nonsense words in a reading selection. Have students replace these with appropriate words, based on the context. This may be used with verbs, adjectives, etc., and works effectively with transitional words.

2. Give students list of connecting words. Make up paragraphs and have them insert the appropriate connecting word.

Addition	Opposite or Contrast	Conclusion	Example
and	but	therefore	for instance
also	however	hence	for example
another	on the otherhand	in summary	
in addition	on the contrary	to conclude	
second, third			
moreover			

3. Ask students to write a paragraph of 6 or 7 sentences in which at least three different pronouns are used to start sentences.

4. Direct class to summarize a movie or TV show in 5-6 sentences. Begin at least 3 sentences with different adverbs that show time. (Then, later, further on, next).

5. Take time to point out transitional devices in material being read for class. Note repetition of key words and phrases, use of pronouns, connecting words and phrases.

   The following paragraph might be used to combine activities # 2 and 5.

Middle school students find many ways to earn money. Some babysit for relatives and friends. In summer, many students mow lawns, weed gardens and detassel corn. They rake leaves in autumn and shovel snow in winter. _____ source of funds for both boys and girls is the paper route. These are usual ways of earning money; _____, some students have invented unique jobs of their own. _____, one eighth grader collects beer cans and then sells his duplicates at a profit. _____ designs, makes and sells jewelry. _____ girl molds and sells decorative, scented candles.

After discussion, have students add a final sentence of their own and underline any transitional devices they use to relate it to the rest of the paragraph.

6. Ask students to write sentences using conjunctive adverbs in a prescribed way. The sentences relate to things in the students' experiences. Example: Write two complete thoughts about what happened before school this morning. Open the second thought with then. Continue asking students to open their second thoughts with words such as however, now, finally, suddenly, there.

GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A. SENTENCE SENSE

1. Scrambled sentences: Have students rework sentences that have had their elements scrambled. (Simple example: Sat in the blue hat under the tree in the red shirt the old man peacefully with the bright green leaves.) Consider the confusion that can arise with different placement of elements. Form generalizations for element placement. Compare also the range of acceptable alternatives.

2. Place a sentence from a literary work being studied on the board or overhead. (Faulkner is fun.) Have students isolate the basic message of the sentence (subject and verb perhaps). Ask them to indicate words or word groups added to the basic parts as well as which word or words each group is attached to.

3. Choose a character from a literary work studied. Find a sentence in that work that describes that character in ways students will be familiar with from reading and discussion. On board or overhead write subject and verb of that sentence. Ask students to expand the basic sentence in ways they feel will accurately reflect the character. Students may be told situational details about the character and how many additional elements the author used (three descriptors of character, two of action, etc.). Compare student sentences for accuracy of portrayal as well as clarity and word choice of final sentence. Show original complete sentence for comparison.

4. Give student sentences from literature or elsewhere with relationship words left out. Ask students to replace words. (Example: I won't go to school ____ I'm too tired.) Compare answers for variation in meaning caused by choice, or to list words that show certain kinds of relationships.

5. Word forms: Have students replace incorrect form in a sentence. (Example: Computers product information.) This also relates to grammatical structures.

6. Précis: Give students passages of redundant, cluttered, wordy, overdeveloped sentences to reduce without changing meanings or emphasis. Discuss several student efforts.

B. MECHANICS

1. During class writing time, have handbooks available for student use. Some useful sources are Grammar for Journalists, Callihan, E.L., (revised), Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Co., 1976, (easy to understand; good examples), The Elements of Style, Strunk, Wm., Jr., & E.B. White, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959 (for advanced students; rather complicated) and the AP-UPI Stylebook (most material applicable to regular English class).

2. In student's writing folder, staple sheet on which students may classify greatest mechanics problems in own writing. Provide individual practice material to address specific problems. Focus on only one error type at a time.

3. Read passages aloud for students to punctuate. Discuss different interpretations caused by different kinds of punctuation. Show original and compare.

4. Sentence challenges: Have students try these:

That that is is that that is not is not is not that it it is

John where Mary had had had had had had had had had had had had the teacher's approval (That's right, eleven hads.)

Not only does meaning vary according to punctuation, but meaning is sometimes derived entirely from punctuation.

5. Capitalization: Give students dictated or dittoed passages of ascending difficulty to capitalize. Discuss "rules" as problems arise. (Example: President Smith wrote to the president of the Lions Club, asking about the club's policies.)

6. Direct quotation: When students write passages of dialog, reprint passage for overhead without quote marks. Have class decide what belongs where and compare with original.

7. End quote punctuation: Contrasting pairs - have students punctuate pairs and give reasons for placement.

Example:

Did John say, "There's my book" (?)

John said, "Where's my book(?)"

8. "Write your own books" (review of quotes and underscoring in references): Good for footnote and bibliography form practice also. Students make up bib. list or footnotes citing books and articles they wish they had written.

Example: Smith, Sue, "How to Get Your Little Sister to Take the Rap," Sibling Survival Bulletin, 10: 40-58 0'78

Class should be able to identify the type of material and citation.

C. GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

1. "Mad Lib" type stories written about the class (See Elementary #22): This is a good review of all parts of speech for freshmen.

2. After students have learned the five basic sentence patterns (S-V, S-V-O, S-LV-N, S-LV-Adj., S-LV-IO-O) and basic transformations (Question, passive, etc.), challenge students to find sentences that "don't fit". Place their

sentences on the board (perhaps one each day) and have class reduce sentence to basic pattern. Generalize principles of expansion and addition.

3. Sentence-combining exercises: Two collections of sentences with combining patterns are: Frank O'Hare's Sentencecraft: An Elective Course in Writing, (Ginn & Co., 1975) and Wm. Strong's Sentence Combining: A Composing Book, (Random House, 1973). Good criteria for developing original sentence-combining exercises can be found in Marv Klein's Teaching Sentence Structure & Sentence Combining in the Middle Grades (Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction).

4. Sentence combining and variety: Give students passages of short, choppy sentences to rewrite. Through use of clause-combining (coordinate subordinate noun and relative), and phrase embedding (appositive, participial, gerund, infinitive) students attempt not only to improve the "flow" and complexity, but also to use an appropriate variety of long and short, balanced sentences. Compare finished paragraphs for differences in meaning, emphasis, etc. Sample paragraph:

> Skiing is a popular sport. It is an exciting sport. It is also difficult. Equipment is important. You need skis that fit. You need bindings that release properly. You need poles that are the right length. You need warm clothing. The clothing must be light and flexible. You need skill, too. You need to know how to stop suddenly. You need to know how to turn quickly. You need to know how to keep your balance. Your muscles must be in good condition. They must be flexible and responsive. Leg muscles are the most important. Stomach muscles are important, too. You must practice a great deal. You must challenge yourself often. You try harder and harder hills. You ski as often as you can. Then you will be a good skier.

5. "Let me count the ways": Give students two short combinable sentences. See how many different ways there are to combine them. This gives good practice in terminology. (You can make an adverbial here, or here, etc.)

6. Poetry: Examine examples of poetic inversion. What grammatical structures are movable and to what extent? Consider the unusual structures of poetic language as one of the barriers to immediate comprehension. Why does the poet use them?

7. Parallel structure: Have students correct examples from class writing assignments. Example: Joe loved football, baseball and to play golf.

8. When students have mastered the principles of basic sentence patterns and subordination, they should no longer have serious trouble with accidental fragments. Examine newspapers (especially headlines) and literature for effective purposeful use of fragments.

9. Practice in correct use of tense, inflection and agreement can be given through exercises to meet individual needs and through group study of student writing.

D. DICTION AND USAGE

1. Choose a short passage from literature written in clearly non-standard English. Have students "translate" it, and examine the differences. Consider why the author chose to write as he/she did.

2. When reading literature with difficult dialect or unusual diction, ask students to put it "in their own words" orally to be certain it is understood.

3. Have students write the same information to different audiences; e.g., close friend, elderly relative, class, publication. Compare choices of colloqialisms, etc. Consider implications.

4. Provide "mini-lessons" to correct endemic usage errors; otherwise, provide individual exercises.

5. Guides mentioned in Mechanics #1 offer help with questions of usage.

6. Ask students to rewrite "pompous passages" (perhaps their own) in "plain English."

E. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SENTENCES

1. Have students identify transitional words and phrases in a good piece of writing.

2. Through passages of writing, examine the relationships that transitions can show (Example: on the other hand - contrast; next-chronological development; another - additional facts).

3. Have students insert transitions into a piece of writing that lacks them. Do their transitions accurately reflect the logic and method of development the writer followed?

4. Using student examples, have class improve weak or faulty transitions, or have them suggest alternatives to overused words and phrases.

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"Remarks on Teaching Grammar," Southern Speech Communication Journal, Spring 1973.

"Sentence-Combining Practice Aids Reading Comprehension," Journal of Educational Research, July/August 1977, pp. 318-21.

"Sentence-Combining Practice: Do Gains in Judgments of Writing Quality Persist?" Journal of Education Research, July/August 1977, pp. 318-321.

Strong, William. "Back to Basics and Beyond," English Journal, February 1976, pp. 56-60.

Sutton, Gary A. "Do We Need to Teach a Grammar Terminology?" English Journal, December 1976, pp. 37-40.

"Why Transformational Grammar Fails in the Classroom," College Composition and Communication, December 1977, pp. 352-5.

Winterowd, W. Ross. "A Teacher's Guide to the Real Basics," Language Arts, September 1977, pp. 625-630.

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SELECTED RESOURCES: MIDDLE SCHOOL

O'Hare, Frank. Sentencecraft: An Elective Course in Writing.

> This source of ready-made sentence-combining activities uses signals to produce a single correct sentence.

Voice magazine frequently contains signaled sentence-combining activities

Strong, William. Sentence-Combining: A Composing Book.

> These sentence-combining activities use no signals; groups of sentences relate to one main idea and form a coherent paragraph.

To construct your own activities, see suggestions in Marv Klein's book.

An interesting textbook approach to sentences is the Language 2 book of Scholastic Real World English by Jay Robinson, Bernard van't Hul, and Stephen Dunning; Scholastic Book Service, 1978.

Shaugnessey, Mina. Errors and Expectations.

> This helps the teacher classify and diagnose the reasons that certain student errors recur in the writing of some students and offers practical ways to help the writer.

Wolfe, Don M. Creative Ways to Teach English, Grades 7 to 12.

> This offers invaluable practical tips on specific language activities relative to the lives and interests of your students.

Adams, Anne H. et. al. Mainstreaming in Language Arts and Social Studies: Special Ideas and Activities for the Whole Class.

> Over three hundred actual daily lesson plans are given in the English and social studies areas.

Write On! This public television series begins in the Fall of 1978. The parts of speech are emphasized with colorful, well-done mini-dramas. For further information, call either your local public television station, or if in the southern Wisconsin area, SWECS at the CESA 15 phone: 266-8454.

Wisconsin Writing Project Participants

Summer 1978

Pauli Bamlett
Cambridge Community Schools

Dennis Blackmore
McFarland High School

Tom Braunger
Waunakee High School

Marcy Brueggeman
Black Earth Elementary School

Bonnie Faust
Oregon School District

Cynthia Fillingame
Verona Elementary School

Eleanor Flinn
Mazomanie Elementary School

Maria Foseid
Sennett Middle School, Madison

Connie Haack-Hurlbut
Cambridge Junior High

Nancy Haugen
Park School, Cross Plains

Karen Hauschild
Dickason Junior High, Columbus

Carolyn Hauser
Oregon High School

Margaret Jensen
Sherman School, Madison

Stanford Johnson
Kegonsa Elementary School, Stoughton

Barbara Juenemann
Sun Prairie Junior High School

Russell J. Keeney (Jim)
Stoughton High School

Carol Knutson
Oregon Junior High School

Maribeth Mohan
Middleton High School

Sonja Nikolay
Cambridge Elementary School

Gary R. Oftedahl
Conrad Elvehjem School,
McFarland

Claire Ryan
E.G. Kromrey Middle School,
Middleton

Douglas C. (D.C.) Schuren
Waunakee Junior High

Mary Lou Sharpee
Fuller Street School,
Columbus

Barb Temple
Yahara School, Stoughton

Else Thompson
Columbus High School

Douglas VanDerBurg
Waunakee Elementary School

Diana L. Varner
Verona Middle School

Katherine E. Waack
Sun Prairie High School

Pat Woodring
West High School, Madison

Debbie Zache
Nichols Elementary School,
Monona

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